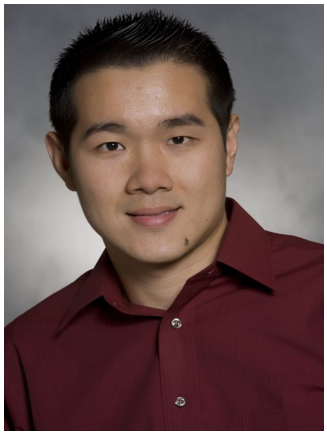
ACMR *Newsletter*
Association for Chinese Music Research
http://acmr.info/
中國音樂研究會通訊
Volume 22, number 2 November 2016

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Chuen-Fung Wong

As ACMR celebrates its thirtieth anniversary, it is my great pleasure to invite you to the 2016 ACMR meeting, to be held on Thursday, November 10, from 8:00 to 10:00 p.m. in Congressional Room B of the Omni Shoreham Hotel, Washington D.C., in conjunction with the sixty-first annual meeting of the Society for Ethnomusicology. Professor Bell Yung, founding president of ACMR and Professor Emeritus of Music at the University of Pittsburgh, will deliver a keynote lecture titled "An Audience of One: The Private Music of the Chinese Literati." An abstract of Professor Yung's keynote lecture is included on page two of this newsletter. ACMR is sponsoring two panels at the SEM meeting this year, "Sounds, Signs, and the Sinophone: Generating Critical Perspectives on Music/Language Relationships" (Thursday, 10:45 a.m.–12:15 p.m.; Forum Room) and "Rethinking Research on Chinese Music: Perspectives from Within and Outside China" (Friday 1:45 p.m.–3:45 p.m.; Congressional Room B). Themes and topics relevant to Chinese music, broadly defined, will be represented in more than a dozen papers altogether at the SEM meeting this year.

The centerpiece of the Fall 2016 issue of *ACMR Newsletter* is Heidi Chan's highly informative review of the latest update of GarageBand, Apple's recording and production software, focusing on its addition of three virtual Chinese musical instruments and a collection of 300 new Apple Loops (sampled audio tracks) of traditional Chinese music. Also included in this issue are reports on two recent conferences held in East Asia: first, a report by Reinhard Straub on the meeting of the ICTM Study Group for the Music of East Asia (MEA) held in Taipei in August; and second, a report by Charlotte D'Evelyn on "Sounds, Images, and Texts on China's Periphery," held in Hong Kong in September. My gratitude goes to editors Yun Emily Wang, Adam Kielman, and Lars Christensen for their great work putting the newsletter together. As always, please consider sending us announcements, new publications, book/audiovisual reviews, field reports, and other relevant items for the next issue of *ACMR Newsletter*. Please feel free to contact me at wong@macalester.edu with any questions or comments about ACMR. I look forward to seeing you in Washington, D.C.

Chuen-Fung Wong
ACMR President

Inside this issue:

Membership Reminder

We encourage your new membership and renewal for the 2016–17 period.

Current membership dues are $15 for those in professional positions and independent scholars, and $10 for students. Please define your status when paying. Please make note of any address or email changes. Payments made at the annual meeting, especially in cash, are cumbersome and a poor use of the business meeting time.

Payment can now be made through the ACMR PayPal account. If you wish to pay through this method send Alan Kagan a request for a PayPal invoice and currency type (e.g. Hong Kong Dollars) at kagan001@umn.edu. Otherwise, make your payment by check to ACMR and mail to:

Alan L. Kagan, Treasurer
Association for Chinese Music Research
1376 Christensen Ave.
West St. Paul, MN 55118

ACMR 2016 Keynote Lecture

Professor Bell Yung, founding president of ACMR and Professor Emeritus of Music at the University of Pittsburgh, will give a keynote lecture at the upcoming ACMR meeting, held in conjunction with the sixty-first annual meeting of the Society for Ethnomusicology in Washington, D.C.

The keynote lecture is an event that celebrates the thirtieth anniversary of ACMR. Professor Yung will speak on the topic "An Audience of One: The Private Music of the Chinese Literati." The keynote lecture will be introduced by Professor Helen Rees (UCLA, Ethnomusicology).

Date: Thursday, November 10, 2016
Time: 8:00 p.m.
Venue: Congressional Room B, Omni Shoreham Hotel, Washington D.C.

Title:
An Audience of One:
The Private Music of the Chinese Literati

Abstract:
To most ethnomusicologists, music is a social activity with the main goal of interacting with an audience. China's *qin* music, historically associated with the literati who play primarily for themselves as a private activity, is an exception. While *qin* ideology stresses extra-musical meaning and cultural significance, it is also an expressive art. This paper argues that in playing privately, the player turns inwardly toward himself rather than outwardly toward an audience. In such a performance context, music and musicality need to be assessed by criteria different from those commonly accepted for public music.

Bell Yung visiting Pittsburgh in May 2016
(Photo credit: Yuko Eguchi)

Bell Yung is Professor Emeritus of Music at the University of Pittsburgh. His recent publications as author, translator, editor, or co-editor are *Remembering Rulan Chao Pian, Harvard's First Female Professor of Chinese Heritage* (2016, in Chinese); *Uncle Ng Comes to America: Narrative Songs of Immigration and Love* (2013); *The Flower Princess, A Cantonese Opera* (2010); *Music and Cultural Rights* (2009); and *The Last of China's Literati: The Music, Poetry and Life of Tsar Teh-yun* (2008).

People and Places

Joys Cheung, formerly a Research Assistant Professor at the Department of Music, Chinese University of Hong Kong, is joining the Graduate Institute of Ethnomusicology, National Taiwan Normal University in Taiwan, beginning in Spring 2017.

Dr. Luo Xi 羅希 from Xi'an is spending this year in residence at the University of British Columbia (Vancouver) as a postdoctoral research fellow. Dr. Luo will be working with Alan Thrasher in studying the structural elements and modal system in Xi'an *guyue* 西安鼓樂, including a historic preservation of *suzipu* 俗字譜 notation.

Colin P. McGuire is beginning a two-year Government of Ireland Postdoctoral Fellowship at University College Cork under the supervision of Jonathan Stock. His project, "Intertextuality in Chinese Martial Arts: Transnational Identity Construction at the Junctures of Kung Fu, Music, Lion Dance, and Film" aims to understand how, in the emerging postmodern era, people (trans)form their identities vis-à-vis transnational flows and the hegemony of dominant groups. The research on the Cantonese, a significant southern Chinese diaspora, provides compelling case studies for broader global comparison. Whether through ethnographic data or cinematic text analysis, McGuire's work explores how the power of Chinese martial arts is no longer a question of military might, but rather one of self-defense skills and heroic ideals embodied in performance, film, and music, a continuum of efficacy and entertainment that allows kung fu to act as a flexible medium for expressing values and beliefs as well as negotiating multicultural contexts.

Yuxin Mei, a graduate student in Ethnomusicology at the University of North Texas (UNT), was awarded the 2016 Vida Chenoweth Student Paper Prize from the SEM Southern Plains Chapter for her paper, "Negotiating with Sound: The Living Sound Niche Created by the Chinese Immigrants in Plano-Dallas Area."

The University of North Texas has established a Chinese Ensemble class directed by **Yuxin Mei**. It is the first such ensemble both at UNT and in the state of Texas. Videos of the premiere of the ensemble are posted on Youtube:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qNGxSFw0mR0
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ml4EykENplk

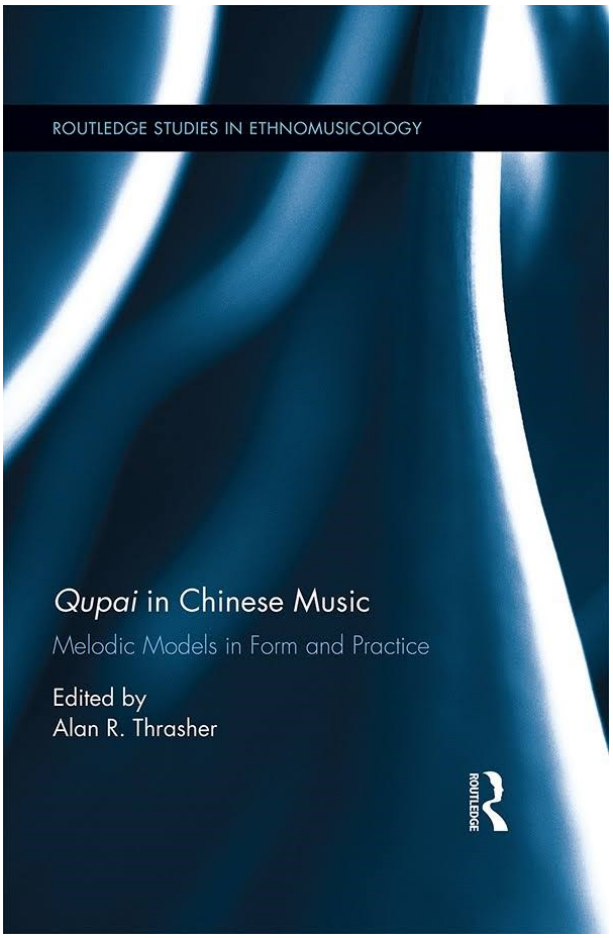
Dr. Lukas Park completed his dissertation, "Tonality of Hua'er: The Collective Intentionality of Sound Bodies," in the Department of Musicology at the University of Vienna in September 2015. He is currently Assistant Professor of Ethnomusicology at the Soochow University School of Music.

Tonality of Hua'er: The Collective Intentionality of Sound Bodies

Hua'er, literally translated as "flower songs," is a genre of the so-called mountain songs in Chinese folk music. Hua'er is performed in many different settings, most often in the form of vocal dialogue singing at annually held Hua'er festivals. It is commonly assumed that Hua'er has existed since the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), as is evidenced in classical poems since that time. Traditionally Hua'er is sung in rural areas in China's multicultural northwest. Today, modern forms of Hua'er are also performed in Beijing's urban folk circles. I identified the research gap in scholarly debate about Hua'er as a lack of research on its musical features. A theoretically informed examination of tonality and the musical elements comprised therein, for example temperament or timbre, was missing. As a theoretical basis of this dissertation, the social reality of a tone system (as a manifestation of a common identity) is defined as one kind of collective intentionality. In detail, the tonality of Hua'er is conceptualised via the emic approach of sound bodies (*yinqiang*). The sound body theory describes the smallest meaningful unit of Chinese folk music melodies as a unity of pitch, dynamics, and timbre. Are these sound bodies the "lowest common musical denominator" that binds all the people who sing Hua'er together? I hypothesise that the tonality of Hua'er is commonly shared and collectively intentioned by all peoples residing in the Hua'er region. Therefore, mutual bonds and affiliations between individuals within the Hua'er sound group are established which overwrite ideological concepts of ethnicity, nationality, or minority, as well as religious concepts of Islam, Buddhism, or Chinese folk religion. Through computer-facilitated sonological analysis, a selection of Hua'er tunes (collected during field research in Gansu) by professional and amateur singers of different age, gender, origin, and ethnicity, are scrutinised. The results suggest that the tonality of Hua'er, collectively intentioned and conceptualised via sound bodies, is indeed an important constitutive element for the construction of the Hua'er sound group - possibly even more so than Hua'er festivals, common lyrics and language, or ethnicity.

Recent Publications

Gong, Hong-yu. 2016. "Music to Teach and Transform – Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao and the Beginnings of Modern Music Teaching in China." *Journal of Music in China* 6(1): 75-98.



Thrasher, Alan R., ed. 2016. *Qupai in Chinese Music: Melodic Models in Form and Practice*. New York: Routledge.

An overview of the publication from Alan Thrasher:

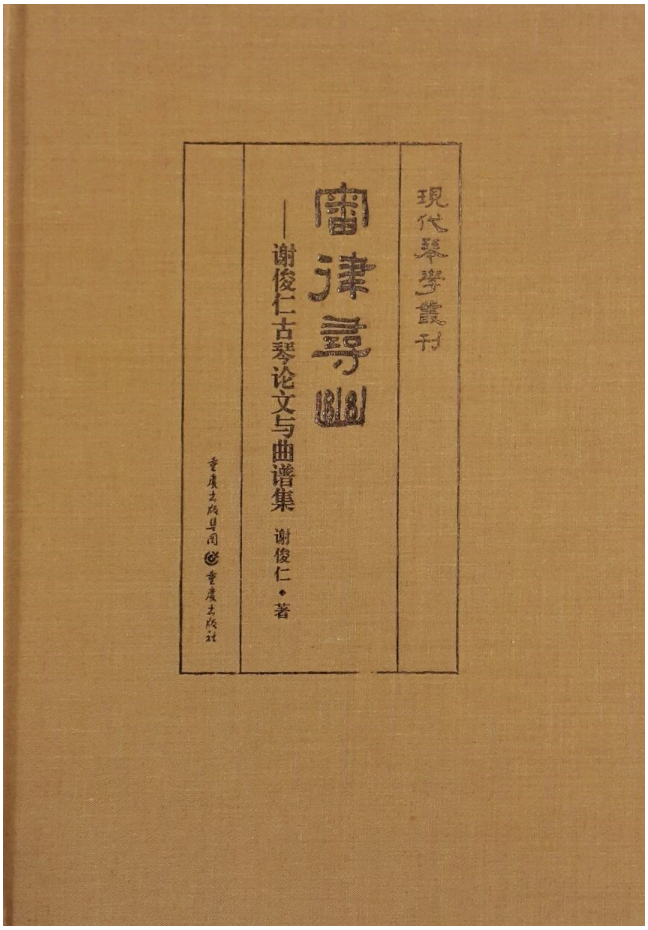
In this volume, four colleagues joined me with the goal of examining the various *qupai* 曲牌 types and methods by which these have been varied in creation of repertoire. In chapter 1, I introduce the nature of the *qupai* system, together with typologies advanced by twentieth-century Chinese scholars, using examples drawn from three *guochang qu* 過場曲 melodies including *Ku Huangtian* 哭皇天 and *Feng Ru Song* 風入松. Chapter 2, written by Kar Lun Alan Lau 劉嘉麟, traces the historical development of the *qupai* phenomenon from the Tang and Song periods forward, and also discusses the challenges in early Chinese music reconstruction and the question of *qupai* relationships with the metrically organized *banqiang* 板腔 forms of organization.

The focus of chapter 3 is upon the movement of *qupai* melodies among genres within China and beyond. François Picard demonstrates that famous melodies such as *Chao Tianzi* 朝天子 and *Liu Yao Jin* 柳搖金 became widespread in different variations, and were also introduced into Europe and examined by scholars such as Amiot and Hornbostel. Chapters 4 and 5 are theory- and practice-oriented, each beginning with an examination of the basic structural characteristics of three very central *qupai*: *Xiao Kaimen* 小開門, *Liuqing Niang* 柳青娘, and the widespread and influential *Baban* 八板. The author then examines the several methods by which these *qupai* were varied in creation of now-standard repertoire.

Chapter 6 is focused upon the nature of vocal *qupai* in *Kunqu* classical opera. Using *Daodao Ling* 叨叨令 as an example, Picard and Lau examine the interactions between text and music at various structural levels, such as pitch contour and phrasing, demonstrating that correspondence between text and music is not absolute. In chapter 7, Yu Hui 喻輝 examines the use of folksong as *qupai* in the regional opera tradition of central Anhui province. Here, both traditional *qupai* associated with Beijing opera and *shan'ge* 山歌 ("mountain songs") are performed within the opera setting.

Finally, in the last three chapters, different methods are examined by which *qupai* melodies have been incorporated into *taoqu* 套曲 suite forms. In chapter 8, I introduce the basic concepts, notably "beat-variation forms" (板式變奏體) and "chain forms" (聯曲體), with an example from the Minnan repertoire derived in part from northern *xiansuo* 弦索 music. Another example of the north-south melodic relationships is addressed in chapter 9 by Chen Yingshi 陳應時, who examines three versions of the instrument suite, *Meihua Sannong* 梅花三弄, as performed in two regions of China. Then, in the last chapter, Picard examines vocal and instrumental versions of the Buddhist-influenced suite, *Pu'an Zhou* 普庵咒. A well-known suite of Buddhist melodies and associated *qupai*, *Pu'an Zhou* has been widely performed in the imperial court, in the northern temples and in common-practice ritual contexts.

Recent Publications (cont.)



Tse, Chun Yan 谢俊仁. 2016. *Shen Lü Xun You: Xie Junren Guqin Lunwen yu Qupuji* 审律寻幽：谢俊仁古琴论文与曲谱集 [Collection of Academic Papers and Musical Works on the Qin by Tse Chun Yan]. Chongqing: Chongqing Chubanshe 重庆出版集.

Chongqing Chubanshe has published a collection of Tse Chun Yan's academic papers, compositions and reconstructions on the *qin*. The collection brings together his main academic and creative output for the past several decades, especially from the decade during and since his PhD study at the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Yung, Bell 荣鸿曾 and **Samuel Wu** 吴淼鑫, eds. 2016. *Zai Ni Wenhou de Xiaorong Zhong Dangyang: Jinian Hafo Daxue Shouwei Huayi Nü Jiaoshou Zhao Rulan* 在你温厚的笑容中荡漾：纪念哈佛大学首位华裔女教授赵如兰［Remembering Rulan Chao Pian, Harvard's First Female Professor of Chinese Heritage]. Shanghai: Shanghai Conservatory of Music Press.

Remembering Rulan Chao Pian, Harvard's First Female Professor of Chinese Heritage, edited by Bell Yung and Samuel Wu, has seventeen contributions from Mrs. Pian's family, former students, colleagues, and friends and over one hundred photographs. It was published by the Shanghai Conservatory Press in October 2016. Ordering and purchasing information will follow. For a brief biographical sketch of Mrs. Pian in English, see ACMR Newsletter Vol. 20 No. 1 (http://evols.library.manoa.hawaii.edu/bitstream/10524/36255/1/acmr_v20n1_2014.pdf). The cover photograph was taken in 1986 at the first meeting of ACMR at the University of Rochester.

GarageBand's Virtual Chinese Instruments

Heidi Chan, York University

On May 16, California-based Apple Inc. announced the latest update to their popular software music program, GarageBand. The most notable addition to the program was the inclusion of three virtual Chinese instruments and a collection of 300 new Apple Loops of traditional Chinese music. In this review, I examine the sound quality, graphical user interface (GUI), and my overall impression of these instruments and samples. For this review, I also invited three members of the Toronto Chinese Orchestra to test and "play" the instruments, listen to the Apple loops, and ask for their feedback and impressions of the software. I also offer an overview of current virtual Chinese instruments and music software products.

Overview

GarageBand, Apple's free music recording and production software, is available for both Mac OS (laptop and desktop computer) and iOS (iPhone, iPad) operating systems. Since May 2016, three Chinese instruments—*erhu*, *pipa*, and a Chinese percussion set—have been added to both programs and are available via a software update for those using older devices. The sounds of the instruments consist of multi-samples, meaning that they are based on recordings of individual notes of the actual instruments played at different dynamic levels, with the samples mapped across a virtual sampler (see an example in Fig. 1), which is then programmed and packaged under a graphical user interface (GUI) that allows the user to "play" the sounds. The OS implementation allows the instruments to be played with the keyboard of a computer (called "musical typing") or USB music keyboards and controllers, while the iOS version can be played directly on the multi-touch surface of an iPhone or iPad.

Sounds and Interface

The samples used in the three instruments are all clean, detailed, and realistic. The *pipa* is crisp, and the *erhu* sounds intimate, with a presence of the friction between bow and string, especially in the louder samples. The percussion set, comprised of a large drum (with centre and rim shots), a set of 5 tuned drums, 6 woodblocks, 2 gongs, and 2 pairs of cymbals, is also of high quality, with a good representation of varying dynamic levels, especially for the gongs and cymbals. There are basic reverb, delay, and tone controls for each instrument (as well as Master effects settings) that allow the user to shape and add ambience to them.

In most other virtual instruments that I have used, such as MOTU's *Ethno*, UVI's *World Traditions*, or Kong Audio's virtual Chinese instruments, instruments are typically mapped across the actual pitch range of the physical instrument on a keyboard grid, so that the recorded samples are mapped to its original pitch for the highest sonic fidelity (Figs. 2A-2B). The two pitched Chinese instruments in GarageBand, on the other hand, are mapped across the entire range of the keyboard, meaning that one can, for example, play an *erhu* sound three octaves below the instrument's actual range, pitch-shifting and stretching the samples beyond recognition in the most extreme case. In a way, this implementation allows users to experiment with tones and textures outside of an instrument's usual tonal and frequency range, extending the sonic possibilities. On the other hand, this is atypical of the design of today's virtual instruments, as traditional instruments seldom have the pitch range of a grand piano, and developers often map articulation switches to a lower or higher part of the keyboard outside of an instrument's range, so that a performer with a full-size keyboard can "switch" articulations while playing an instrument (Fig. 3).

While both operating systems offer access to the same playing techniques for the virtual instruments, they differ in implementation and control, and it is here that the

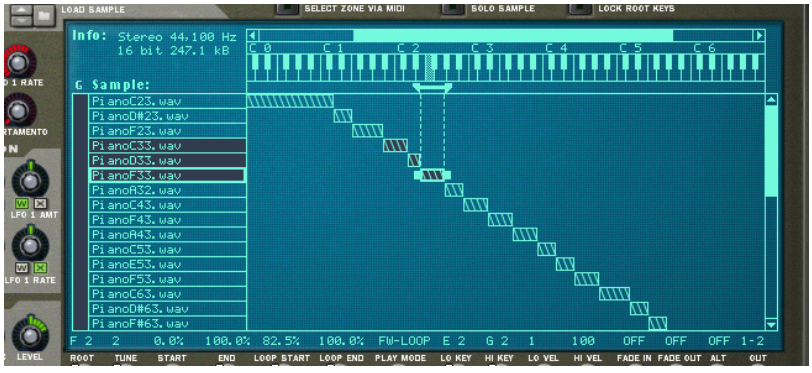


Fig. 1. An example of key zone mapping on Propellerhead Reason's NN-XT sampler. Recorded samples of a piano at different key ranges are mapped accordingly into the sampler, to achieve a more realistic sound. By contrast, in the early days of digital sampling, one sample – middle C of a piano, for example – would be mapped across the entire keyboard, causing extreme and undesirable pitch-shifting and spectral artifacts.

GarageBand (cont.)

Figs. 2A (left) & B (right). Two virtual "ethnic" instruments with realistic playing range and key switching. For each of these programs, the larger highlighted section of the keyboard is the playing range, i.e., where the samples are mapped onto.

significance of the user interface in the overall experience of a virtual instrument is most apparent – a point I did not realize until this review, having mostly only used virtual instruments and software on a computer-based system. The Mac OS version puts the *erhu*'s vibrato intensity and the *pipa*'s tremolo speed as a knob alongside "Ambience" and "Reverb" controls, with the *erhu's* bowing articulations ("Sustain," "Short," and "Horse Effect") as switches (Fig. 4). As well, the tremolo can only be activated using the "Tab" key while the Musical Typing window is open (Fig. 5), or using the sustain pedal of a piano keyboard. Because the Tremolo Speed control can only be adjusted with a mouse or trackpad and cannot be assigned to a physical control on a USB or MIDI controller (unlike other music programs such as Cubase, Ableton Live, and Logic), this makes accessing the *pipa* tremolo, one of the characteristic sounds and most common techniques of the instruments, rather awkward and unintuitive.

The percussion set, like other drum sets in GarageBand, has individual drum sounds mapped to separate keys on the keyboard. Like the *erhu* and *pipa*, each drum instrument is velocity-sensitive, with clear tonal differences between the velocity layers. The large Chinese drum features two kinds of side shots: a single rim shot and a sustained rolling sound made by the drum stick scraping across the tacks on the side of the drum. Both pairs of cymbals include closed and open hits, as well as a sustained scraping/rubbing sound. I found the cymbal and gong samples particularly lively and organic,

Fig. 3. Kong Audio's LiuQin with keys-switching section highlighted in purple on the virtual keyboard.

Fig. 4. User interface of the virtual erhu on Apple OS operating system.

Fig. 5. GarageBand's "Musical Typing" window.

GarageBand (cont.)

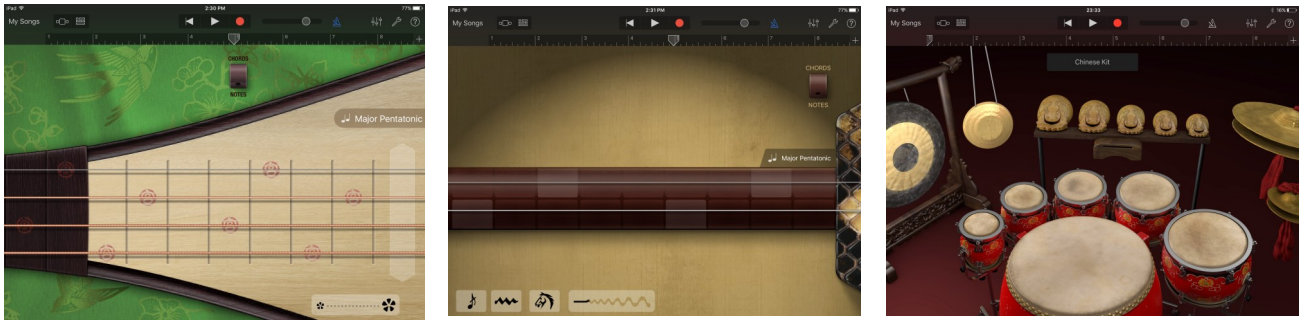


Fig. 6A-C. The graphical user interfaces (GUIs) of the pipe, erhu, and Chinese percussion kit on the iOS platform.

but wished that more samples were taken from different areas of the large Chinese drum, as playing on different parts of the drum skin is a common feature of Chinese drum performance practice.

The instruments found in the iOS version of GarageBand, by contrast, seem almost altogether different instruments, primarily by virtue of the touchscreen user interface, which allows for very different gestural control and visual feedback, and, in my opinion, provides a more intuitive way of playing them. One of the main advantages of the iOS interface is the instruments' visual representation, which allows the user to "play" the strings of the *erhu* and *pipa* by touching the screen (Figs. 6A, 6B), and by pressing on the (very detailed) graphic of each drum in the percussion set (Fig. 6C). This visual feedback also offers *glissando* playing and string-bending on the *erhu* and *pipa* respectively (Fig. 7). The screen also offers easier accessibility to various articulations, including grace notes and trill buttons for the *erhu* that was not available in the Mac OS version, and an easily accessible slider for controlling the tremolo speed on the *pipa*.

Fig. 7. The visual feedback of string-bending on the pipa.

There are a number of features specific to the iOS version that make these instruments more "playable" and streamlined. One of them is the "Chord" mode, which allows the user to play pentatonic notes within specific sets of chords, which are user-definable (Fig. 8). This seems to be designed for users to easily play along, or "jam" to songs with popular chord progressions without needing to worry about playing non-scale notes. To facilitate jamming and one-touch access to "Chinese-sounding" riffs, there is an "Autoplay" function that plays four different variations of traditional musical phrases in whichever chord one presses. Another iOS feature is the ability to set the virtual frets of the *erhu* and *pipa* to specific scales (Fig. 9), so that the frets are tempered to those scales. Combined with the feature to set the overall key of the song one is working on (Fig. 10), changing keys and scales on these virtual instruments becomes much more effortless than on the actual instruments, a luxury that performers of the real instruments may envy (especially for the *erhu*).

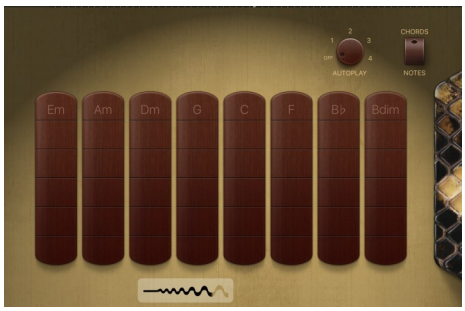


Fig. 8. The Chord mode in the iOS erhu, which is identical in the pipa.

Although the instruments on the iOS version benefit from the touch-screen interface, enhanced visual feedback, and key- and scale-adjustment capabilities, and overall offers a more immediately satisfying experience of the instruments, I found that playing them on a computer with a USB piano keyboard actually provided more sensitive and accurate velocity control and range. I felt that through the keyboard, I was able to play both softly and forcefully, and to hear a smoother range of velocity layers, whereas on the iPad, I was able to hear only three or four separate velocity zones, and found it more difficult to play the instruments softly. Apple's press release mentioned that for devices with 3D Touch control—primarily iPhone 6 and 6S—one can vary the intensity of the *erhu*'s tremolo by varying the pressure of one's touch, but I was not able to test that feature as it was not available on my iPad Pro. The USB keyboard, using

GarageBand (cont.)

both keys and trigger pads, also lent itself better to playing the percussion kit with more dynamic control.

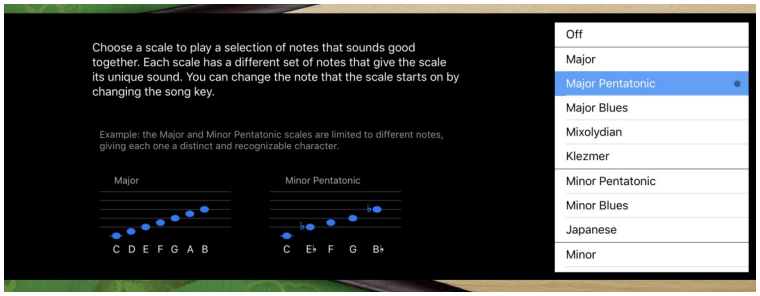


Fig. 9. Scale selection window (iOS).

Loops

As mentioned above, GarageBand's update also adds 300 Apple Loops of traditional Chinese instruments—audio recordings of musical phrases and passages, all of which can be synchronized to the master tempo of a song file. In addition to loops of the three virtual instruments, other instruments sampled include the *dizi*, *guzheng*, *yangqin*, as well as less commonly known (and sampled) instruments such as *guanzi*, *guqin*, *liuqin*, *sheng*, *hulusi*, *xun*, *daruan*, and *sanxian*. The loops are labeled using the instrument name along with descriptive, evocative terms such as "Storyteller Memories Daruan," "Jingnan Mist and Rain Guzheng," "Nostalgic Loess Plateau Sheng," and "Casual Stroll Pipa." The loops vary in length from 1 to 8 bars.

Another iOS-specific feature in GarageBand is the Live Loops mode that allows users to load and trigger tempo-synced Apple Loops within the software in a grid. Although Live Loops is not a new feature, the update includes two new Live Loop project files, "Chinese Traditional" and "Chinese Modern," containing multiple tracks of both Chinese and Western electronic instruments (Figs. 11A-11C).

The coverage of instruments and stylistic representation of the Chinese Apple Loops collection is impressive. The looping is seamless, and the time-stretching (where the loop stretches to match the tempo of the song) is comparable to some of the time-stretching algorithms in other music programs such as Ableton Live. Having said that, some of the Chinese Apple Loops lack the pristine sound quality of the virtual instruments, and have an almost field recording quality to them. It was clear that not all the loops were recorded at the same time and location, as some loops contained varying degrees of room tone and noise, while others sounded more close-miked. In general, the Apple Loops had a more "lo-fi" quality to them, which may be the desired aesthetic of the developers. As discussed below, the members of the Toronto Chinese Orchestra also noted the contrasting sound quality of the Apple Loops to the virtual instruments, as well as commented on the performance style and technique of the samples.

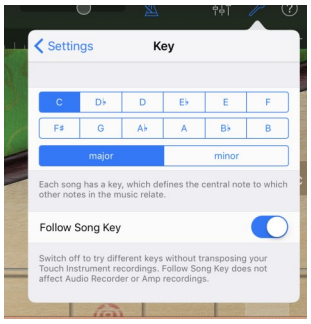
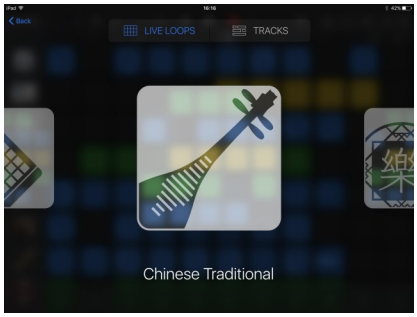


Fig. 10. Song key selection window (iOS).

Support and Documentation

The original press release from Apple for the GarageBand update outlines many of the features of the instruments and Apple Loops mentioned here. As with most music software updates, I was expecting some documentation on the new additions, but there was neither technical information on how to play the instruments, nor background information on the instruments themselves in the GarageBand Help menu. Through some internet searching, I finally found



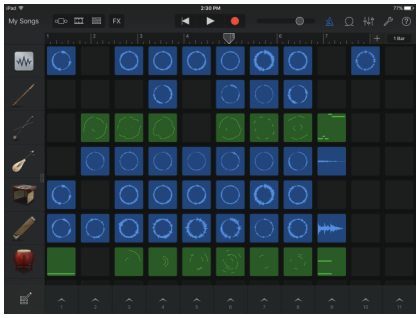


Fig. 11A & 11B (left and center). Demo Live Loops project files for Chinese instruments (iOS). Fig. 11C (at right). Inside the "Chinese Traditional" Live Loops session.

GarageBand (cont.)

documentation online in the GarageBand Support page on Apple's website. There was some background information on the *erhu* and *pipa,* and instructions on playing the instruments only within the iOS version. There was no separate document for the Chinese percussion set, which is unfortunate, as I would have liked to have access to a list of the available sounds and articulations in the percussion set, as well as the names of the instruments, if I was a user unfamiliar with Chinese percussion.

Impressions from Professional Chinese Musicians

For this review, I invited three professional musicians from the Toronto Chinese Orchestra to provide feedback on the virtual Chinese instruments in GarageBand. The participants included Patty Chan, president and concertmaster of the Toronto Chinese Orchestra, and orchestra members Di Zhang (*yangqin*) and Felix W.T. Yeung (*ruan*, *liuqin*). I presented both versions of GarageBand and provided a USB keyboard (Akai APC 25) for them to play the instruments on the Mac OS version.

To my surprise, all three musicians had never used or seen virtual Chinese instruments before seeing them in GarageBand, although they had heard of GarageBand before. I first explained the two different user interfaces, how the instruments were created (by sampling real instruments), and how to access the Apple Loops.

After hearing and playing the instruments on both platforms, one of the first consensuses from all three musicians was that the iOS interface was a lot more intuitive and "fun" to play, and, to their ears, sounded more "authentic," as the multi-touch interface allowed them to play *glissando*s on the *erhu* and string-bending on the *pipa*, which required separate controls on the keyboard. Felix Yeung, who took notes while testing the software, first commented on the availability of rim shots on the large Chinese drum, and was impressed with the graphics and overall sound of the percussion set in the iOS version. He liked the vibrato of the *erhu*, and commended the convincing *glissando* implementation, which he noted is a very common performance technique for an essential sound of the *erhu*. In his notes, Yeung wrote: "in Chinese music, we sort of like

Virtual Chinese Instruments and Sample Libraries – A Brief Overview

Sampled loops and phrases of traditional Chinese instruments have been commercially available for over two decades, and were first offered as CD collections of audio loops and samples in different formats for use in software programs. When the late 1990s saw a major paradigm shift from hardware-based music production methods to software- and computer-based workflows, the demand for "virtual instruments"—software emulations of acoustic or vintage, electronic instruments, which is also called "plugins"—became an industry-shaping force.

One of the major genres that emerged in the virtual instrument industry is the "world" and "ethnic" category. Some of the early sample collections of Chinese instruments include *Legend of China* (2003) by the Japanese company Discovery Sound (www.discoverysound.com), as well as *Heart of Asia*, released by Spectrasonics (www.spectrasonics.com) in 1994, a groundbreaking collection of musical samples from Asian music performance traditions (recorded in Asia by Singapore-based studio Schtung Music). Numerous other "world" and "Asian" sample collections and virtual instruments (some of which are listed below) also often contain Chinese instrument samples.

One of the most notable developers of traditional Chinese instrument plugins is Kong Audio (www.chineekong.com), a China-based music software company founded in 2003 by Dong-sheng Shan and Anthony Chou, which has developed the most comprehensive and highly acclaimed collection of virtual Chinese instruments on the market today, ranging from *bawu* and *sheng* to *matouqin* and percussion, including their recent release of a complete sampled set of *bianzhong* bells.

The world of software ethnic plugins offers almost every instrument from around the world, with developers from all continents, musical and technical backgrounds and visions. Below is a select list of other virtual Chinese instruments as well as a number of popular virtual world instrument collections.

Chinese Instruments:

- Kong Audio collection (www.chineekong.com)
- Soniccouture *Guzheng* (www.soniccouture.com)
- Best Service *Gu Zheng*, *Peking Opera Collection* (www.bestservice.de)
- Ariasounds *Chinese Xiao Flute* (www.ariasounds.com)
- Embertone *Chang Erhu* (www.embertone.com)
- Evolution Series *World String Guzheng* (www.evolutionseries.com)
- Ilya Efimov *Bawu*, *Hulusi* (www.ilyaefimov.com)
- Soundiron *Street Erhu* (www.soundiron.com)

Asian/World Collections:

- Eastwest/Quantum Leap *Ra*, *Silk Road* (www.soundsonline.com)
- Spectrasonics *Heart of Asia*, *Vocal Planet* (www.spectrasonics.com)
- MOTU *Ethno* (www.motu.com)
- Garritan *World* (www.garritan.com)
- UVI *World Traditions*, *Spirit of Gongs* (www.uvi.net)
- Evolution Series *World Percussion Asia*
- Best Service *Oriental World*

GarageBand (cont.)

to use sounds in between the major notes."

Yeung thought the *pipa* sounded "not bad," but that despite the tactile interface, he observed that it was difficult to play faster passages with it. More importantly, he noted that the *pipa* did not have a "residue sound" (resonance from the body of the instrument), and therefore did not sound as real to him. Interestingly, even though as far as I could tell the same samples were used in both versions of GarageBand, Yeung, as well as Zhang and Chan, had a very different impression of the instruments in the Mac OS version. Yeung thought that the *erhu* on the computer sounded "like a wind instrument," and that the *pipa* sounded very "electric." He noted that "the 'Chineseness' is not there" and that the Mac OS instruments sounded like "Westernized Chinese food." He elaborated on the comment, explaining that the instruments sounded, to him, like a Western approximation of what they thought these instruments sounded like. In my view, that impression was in no small part due to the user interface—the fact that the instruments were played on a keyboard controller with very different mechanisms, offering gestural control that are vastly different from those of the actual instruments. Other than the percussion set, both Yeung and Chan were not impressed with the sound of the *erhu* on the Mac OS platform. Zhang also remarked that the iOS instruments sounded better and were more "real" to her. It is interesting to note that for all three musicians, their impression and evaluation of a virtual instrument's sound quality is inseparable from the performance technique and characteristic articulations of the instrument. For all three musicians, the interface on the iOS provided an impression of a better-sounding set of instruments.

Perhaps the most interesting dialogue I had with the musicians were of the Chinese Apple Loops. Upon hearing a few of the loops, they immediately described them as "old school" and "old-sounding." Yeung described them as "before our time," while Zhang felt they were taken from an "older generation" of performances. Chan went so far as to say that the musicians who performed the Apple Loops would not be accepted into today's Chinese orchestras based on their technique, which lacked "refinement." She emphasized the idea of more "refined" techniques in today's traditional Chinese performance practices. Zhang also noted that the tone of the *yangqin* sounds "too old", like an "old *yangqin,*" and found the tuning and tone of the recordings very different from the instrument she is familiar with. She noted that the modern *yangqin* uses a different type of wood than older instruments, and today's *yangqin*, in her opinion, sounds almost like a piano.

To finish, Chan offered some interesting cultural and historical perspectives on the possible rationale behind the choice of musical samples and their sound quality. Her observations on the stylistic characteristics of the Chinese Apple Loops is worth quoting at length here:

Looking at the history of Chinese music that's influenced Western music, or Western composers looking for Chinese influence in their music, for [something] that has some Chinese elements in it, they want to…you know, you hear a lot of that in the past [Chan sings a familiar pentatonic melody], that type of thing, right? So, it becomes, like, oh, that's what we're expecting, that [says] that it's Chinese, or that must be what authentic Chinese music sounds like, and so, they're looking for that sound. And so when they hear sounds like th[ese Apple Loops], it's like, yeah, that's kind of what Chinese music, to them, should sound like. That's [what] makes it recognizable. So they base their melodies [on] a Chinese…pentatonic [scale], it has to be shaped like this because that sounds Chinese to me. But it's kind of gotten lost; they really haven't listened to how Chinese music has evolved over the years. So now, when you go to China or Taiwan, and you're listening to the music that's not quite from the Cultural Revolution or something. It's changed so much, and it's much more refined, and it's much….as [Zhang] mentioned, the tone, the intonation, everything is much higher quality. And the melodies are not typical. A lot of the melodies during the Cultural Revolution, and [during the] 80s, were based on Chinese folk songs. And so, that's how it sounded kind of very "Chinese." So, I find the Western composers are still looking for that, or they're still looking to those folk songs, because that's "Chinese music" (Personal communication).

Conclusion

Apple's addition of traditional Chinese instruments and sampled loops to their GarageBand software is a welcome contribution to the existing range of virtual Asian instruments. In particular, the design and implementation of the instruments on the iOS platform has demonstrated the potential of touch-screen devices for more organic and intuitive gestural control and "playability" of traditional instruments that are characterized by more microtonal techniques and articulations. Both Mac OS and iOS versions offers three great-sounding instruments, and an impressive collection of loops, with user-friendly GUIs especially on the iOS platform. The documentation for the update is somewhat lacking, as more information on the cultural background and performance practices may help users make the most of these beautiful instruments.

Conference Report: ICTM-MEA

Reinhard Straub, National Chung Hsing University, Taiwan

The ICTM Study Group for Musics of East Asia (MEA) celebrated its tenth anniversary this year fittingly by returning with its fifth symposium (August 25–27) to Taiwan, where the preliminary conference necessary for the official recognition as an ICTM study group was held in 2006. The symposium was hosted jointly by Academia Sinica's Institute of Ethnology and the Department of Traditional Music of Taipei National University of the Arts in Taipei City. With over sixty presenters in twenty panels, including new formats such as a poster session and shorter "lightning papers," as well as a keynote speech by Park Mi-kyung, the symposium underscored once again the vibrancy of this community of researchers. Remarkably, around five-sixths of the presenters hailed from East Asian universities, i.e. from Japan, Taiwan, China, Korea, and Hong Kong, with the rest coming from North American, European, Australian, and Singaporean universities.

Photos courtesy of Institute of Ethnology at Academia Sinica, Taipei

The symposium was themed "East Asian Ethnomusicologies?" The question mark, so I assumed, was to set the tone for a range of self-reflection. At least the variety of workshops, ranging from Paiwan nose flute, Indian *tabla*, Mongolian and Tuvan music, as well as music for *pipa*/*gipe*/*biwa*, suggested that the organizers do not readily subscribe to narrowly defined notions of "East Asia."

Consequently, Tan Shzr Ee (via video call) opened the roundtable discussion at the very end of the conference by putting forth a series of discussion topics, asking questions about the meaning of "East Asia," its specificities, academic lineages and schools of thought, inter-Asian exchange, the changing role of China, the impact of ethnomusicology in East Asia beyond academia, etc. The following discussion proved to be both fruitful and controversial and thus revealed that diversity continues to be a trademark of MEA.

That there is no singular "East Asian ethnomusicology" became obvious, too, from the very range of perspectives on and varieties of music featured in panels and presentations. Needless to say, the size of the symposium, with up to four simultaneous panels, renders it impossible for an individual to provide a representative overview, so the following should be taken for what it is: the viewpoint of a biased individual observer.

To start with, there was a (small) panel on music and eco-criticism, a term that I expect to gain further currency within East Asian music studies, too. Gender studies remain marginal, at least in absolute numbers of presentations, although some papers alluded to related topics. Many researchers retain a fascination with historical (ethno)musicology. Perhaps the real trend is that trans-, inter-, or cross-culturality, or symptoms thereof, in various forms and expressions, and often in conjunction with themes of (post-)colonial modernity and/or globalization, made up an increasing portion of the research presented, although admittedly only some were theorized explicitly as such.

In summary, the symposium has proven that East Asian ethnomusicologies are at their best when they move out of focus the internal and external boundaries of what we think East Asia is made of and lay bare those processes that redefine what is, and what has been, becoming East Asia.

Conference Report: "Sounds, Images, and Texts on China's Periphery" at Hong Kong Baptist University

Charlotte D'Evelyn, California Institute of the Arts

Organized by ACMR President Chuen-Fung Wong, the International Conference on Sounds, Images, and Texts on China's Periphery was held at Hong Kong Baptist University from September 18–20, 2016. Panel topics comprised a fascinating array of issues related to culture on the ethnic, regional, linguistic, and urban socio-economic borderlands of China in regions such as Yunnan, Guizhou, Guangxi, Tibet, Xinjiang, Inner Mongolia, Manchuria, Hubei, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Okinawa. Presenters represented a diversity of fields including ethnomusicology, film studies, history, anthropology, literature, art history, and popular culture studies. The conference generated thought-provoking conversations about what it means to be located at the center or periphery of China, and facilitated productive discussions about expressive cultures at the margins of society and the nation. Highlights of the conference included three keynote speeches (Helen Rees, UCLA; Fred Lau, UH Manoa; Robert Barnett, Columbia), a film screening (Tsekor 2016, directed by Tenzin Sedon), and a concert of Uyghur music from the Ili Valley region of Xinjiang (featuring Abduweli Dawut, voice and dutar; Yakup Ababekri, tembur; and Dilmurat Enwer, satar).

Fred Lau, Charlotte D'Evelyn, and Helen Rees presenting

Group photo of participants

(Photos taken from http://hkbumusic.wixsite.com/sept-conference-2016/photos-gallery with permission)

Upcoming Conferences

Society for Ethnomusicology 2016 Annual Meeting
November 10–13, 2016
Smithsonian Folkways Recordings and The George Washington University
Washington, D.C.
http://www.indiana.edu/~semhome/2016/

115th American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting: "Evidence, Accident, Discovery"
November 16–20, 2016
Minneapolis, Minnesota
http://www.aaanet.org/meetings/

Association for Asian Studies 2017 Annual Conference
March 16–19, 2017
Toronto, Ontario
http://www.asian-studies.org/Conference/

20th Quinquennial Congress of the International Musicological Society
March 19–23, 2017
Tokyo University of the Arts
Tokyo, Japan
http://eventegg.com/ims-2017/

20th CHIME International Conference: "Chinese and East Asian music in Festivals"
March 29–April 2, 2017
Los Angeles, CA
http://yunglie8.wixsite.com/chime/chime-20-call-for-papers
CFP deadline: November 15, 2016

IASPM-Canada/Canadian Society for Traditional Music/Canadian University Music Society (MUSCAN)/Canadian Association of Music Librarians, Archives and Documentation Centre joint meeting
May 25–27, 2017
Toronto, Canada
http://iaspm.ca/
CFP deadline: November 30, 2016

19th Biennial IASPM Conference: "Popular Music Studies Today"
June 26–30, 2017
University of Kassel
Kassel, Germany
http://iaspm2017.uni-kassel.de/

44th ICTM World Conference
July 13–19, 2017
Irish World Academy of Music and Dance, University of Limerick
Limerick, Ireland
http://www.irishworldacademy.ie/ethnomusicology-special-events/ictm-world-conference/